

What should you do *when the water supply is contaminated?*

Occasionally, a public water system may become biologically contaminated. When this happens, DHEC does everything possible to protect your health and the health of your patrons. DHEC will take action by issuing an emergency notice to refrain from using water from the contaminated system, or a “boil water” notice to treat the water before using it.

Questions may be directed to:

- Your local county public health department (DHEC)
- Your local Environmental Quality Control office (DHEC)
- DHEC’s Bureau of Environmental Health — (803) 896-0640
- DHEC’s Bureau of Water — (803) 898-4300

Location:

Environmental Health/Food Protection
8500 Farrow Rd. Bldg. 12
State Park Health Center
Phone: (803) 896-0640

Mailing Address:

SC DHEC—Env. Health/Food
2600 Bull St.
Columbia SC 29201
Fax: (803) 896-0645

For more information
please call:

DHEC’s Division of Food
Protection
(803) 896-0640
(803) 896-0645 fax

[http://www.scdhec.gov/health/
envhlth/food_protection](http://www.scdhec.gov/health/envhlth/food_protection)



ML-018003 12/07

Boil Water Notices: *A Procedure for Insuring Safe Water*

Emergency Guidelines for Restaurants, Grocery
Stores, Schools, Correctional Facilities, Convenience
Stores, and Ice Plants

Process

Safety

Prevention

When an emergency notice or “boil water” notice is issued by DHEC there are several procedures that you should follow to help protect the public’s health:

1. Ensure that all appliances and equipment that use potable water, such as ice machines, soda fountains, drinking fountains, etc., are shut off and are not used until the water supply is declared safe. Ice and beverages produced from the contaminated system must be discarded. When the water supply is declared safe, these appliances and equipment must be sanitized and flushed before resuming use.

2. Use bottled water from an approved source for all drinking, food preparation, cooking, handwashing, and washing of utensils and equipment; or, use water that has been treated by boiling or chemical purification methods. Use only bagged ice from an approved source or ice made from treated water.

3. Ensure that all utensils, equipment, and work surfaces are properly sanitized with an approved sanitizing solution after cleaning.

Note: To ensure safe water, the preferred water sources, in order of preference, are (1) bottled water; (2) boiled water; or (3) chemically treated water.

Use the following procedure to purify water when boiling it:

1. Strain the water through a clean cloth into a clean container to remove any sediment or floating matter.
2. Boil the water vigorously for at least one (1) full minute.
3. After allowing the water to cool, it is ready for use. A pinch of salt added to each quart of boiled water, or pouring it from one clean container to another several times, will improve the taste.

To chemically purify water, one of the following processes may be used:

1. Unscented liquid chlorine laundry bleach: Read the label to find the percentage of available chlorine, then use the following table:

CHLORINE CHART

Available Chlorine	Drops To Be Added Per Quart	
	(Clean Water)	(Cloudy Water)
1 percent	10	20
4 to 6 percent*	2	4
7 to 10 percent	1	2
If not known:	10	20

* Common household laundry bleach (Clorox, Purex, etc.)

- a. Mix the bleach thoroughly with the water by stirring or shaking the water in the container.
- b. Let the treated water stand for 30 minutes.
- c. A slight chlorine odor should be detectable in the water; if not, repeat the dosage and let the water stand for an additional 15 minutes before using.

2. Tincture of Iodine (from medicine chest or first aid kit):

IODINE CHART

Tincture of Iodine	Drops To Be Added Per Quart	
	(Clean Water)	(Cloudy Water)
2 percent	5	10
Let the treated water stand for 30 minutes before using.		

3. Iodine or chlorine tablets (obtained from drug store or sporting goods store):

Follow the instructions on the package.

Note: All parasites may not be destroyed by using either the Chlorine or Iodine methods stated above.

Keep water purified by any of the recommended methods in clean, closed containers.

Under the worst possible circumstances, it may be necessary to cease food preparation and service operations until the water supply is declared safe. If the water supply becomes chemically contaminated, instructions for water use will be issued by DHEC. If this happens, please keep in mind that any action taken is for everyone’s health and safety, including yours.